

MASHKIIIZIIBII NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

# **CHEQUAMEGON POINT PIPING PLOVER**

## **2021 SEASON MONITORING REPORT**



Prepared by Eric Andrews

## Summary

2021 marks the 48th year of monitoring the Great Lakes Piping plover on Chequamegon Point on the south shore of Lake Superior, the 35th year since the species received endangered status, and the 23rd year of partnership in restorative efforts with the Mashkiiziibii Tribe.

The 2021 Chequamegon Point Piping plover monitoring season was a difficult one. Due to complications surrounding the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, as well as widespread staffing shortages, no permanent monitors were able to be secured for the 2021 plover breeding season. As such, monitoring shifts were covered piecemeal by employees and volunteers from both inside and outside the Mashkiiziibii Natural Resources Department. While certain key events were prioritized, the final body of data is much less complete than in previous years where continuous monitor coverage occurred throughout the entire season.

Despite these complications, two Piping plover pairs successfully nested on the Chequamegon Point beach, resulting in seven eggs hatching, seven chicks being banded, and at least three fledging.



Figure 1. Photo by Mikayla Erickson

## Nest 1 - North

Lat/Long: N 46.7074, W -90.75822

Female: X, B<sup>128</sup>:O<sup>B</sup>, B/O

Male: X, -:O<sup>Y</sup>, G/O

Nest discovered: 6/10/21 (1 egg)

Exclosure Installed: 6/15/21

Total Eggs Laid: 4 eggs

Start of Incubation: <6/10/21

Chicks hatched: 4

Chicks fledged: Unknown, all four chicks last observed on 7/27/21 at ~16 days old

Hatch date: 7/11/21

Banding date: 7/22/21

Fledging date: Unknown

Chick band

combinations:

1. X, G : O<sup>Y</sup>, G<sup>355</sup>
2. X, G : O<sup>R</sup>, G<sup>356</sup>
3. X, G : O<sup>B</sup>, G<sup>357</sup>
4. X, G : O<sup>G</sup>, G<sup>358</sup>



Figure 2. Photo by Eric Andrews

## Nest 2 - South

Lat/Long: N 46.70570, W -90.75626

Female: X,-:O,Y

Male: X,-:O,-

Nest discovered: 6/10/21 (3 eggs)

Exclosure Installed: 6/15/21

Total Eggs Laid: 3 eggs

Start of Incubation: <6/10/21

Chicks hatched: 3

Chicks fledged: 3

Hatch date: 6/15/21 < X < 6/23/21

Banding date: 7/2/21

Fledge date: ~7/16/21

Chick band combinations:

1. X, -: O<sup>Y</sup>, G<sup>194</sup>
2. X,-: O<sup>R</sup>, G<sup>212</sup>
3. X,-: O<sup>B</sup>, G<sup>209</sup>



Figure 3. Photo by Mikayla Erickson

## Site Description

Both nests were located close to each other, approximately 690 feet (210 meters) away, in the southern extent of the beach. Due to slightly lower lake levels and shifting beach conditions, the nesting area of the beach was very wide with a broad cobblepan, sitting well up and away from wave action and storm surge.

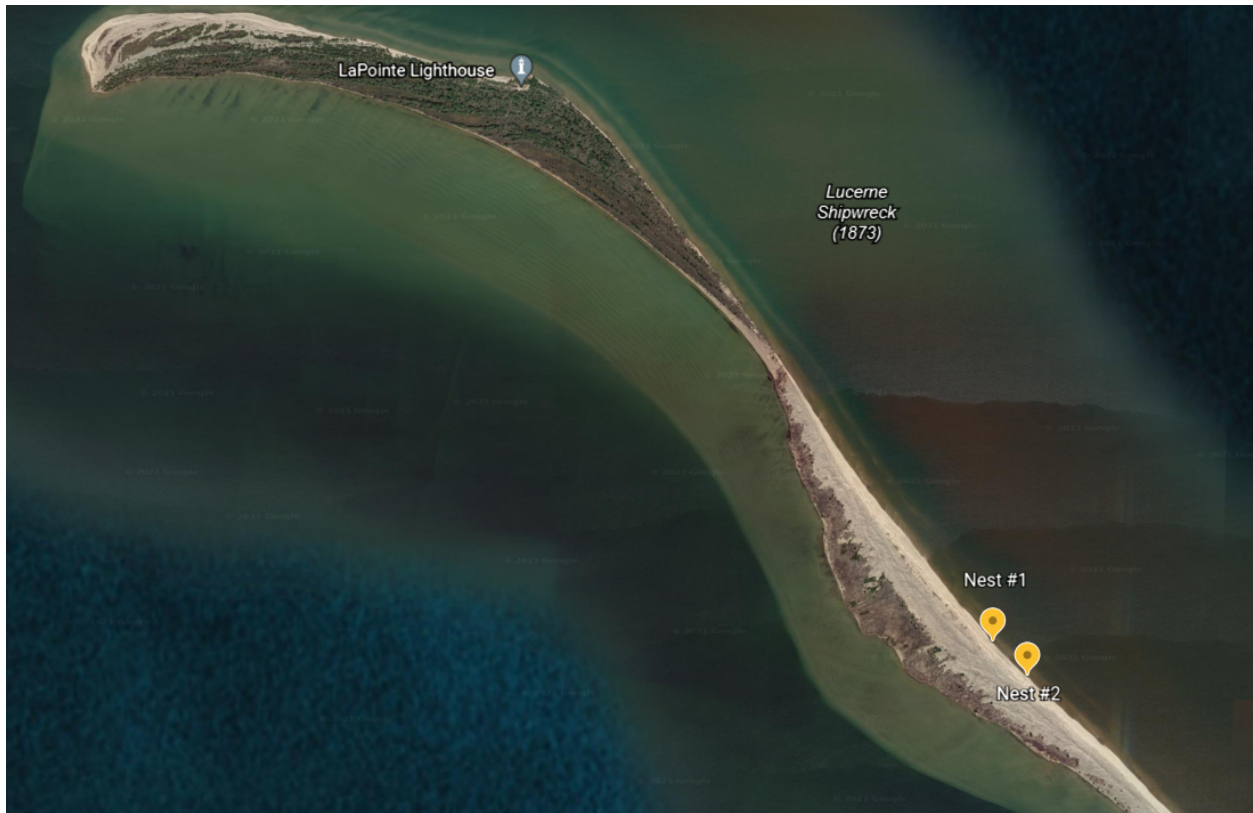


Figure 3. Map of Chequamegon Point (Long Island) PIPL Nesting Locations. Map powered by GoogleEarth.



## Banding

Banding of Piping plover chicks occurred on Chequamegon Point on 7/2/21 and 7/22/21. During the 7/2 banding event, the three chicks from Nest #2 were banded, while the four from Nest #1 were banded during the later event on 7/22. During the 7/2/21 banding day, the team was joined by a team of two journalists from National Geographic, accompanying the National Park Service team to Chequamegon Point and Outer Island.

## Visitation and Human Impact

Due to piecemeal monitor coverage, figures cited in this section should be considered as significantly under-representative of the actual total figure of human visitation on Chequamegon Point. During the month of July, the following was observed by monitors on Chequamegon Point:

- 45 boats
- 126 human visitors, of which 64 were contacted
- 10 dogs, 5 of which were observed off leash

Thankfully the pair of active nests occurred relatively close to each other, allowing for the majority of the beach to be utilized by guests while keeping nest disturbance to a minimum. Unfortunately due to staffing shortages, psychological fencing was never erected around the nesting areas, so in order to maximize protective measures monitors were instructed to prioritize the nesting area for visitor contact and education. Thankfully no confrontational incidents were reported between monitors and guests this year.



## Special Thanks

I want to give a special thank you to all of the volunteer monitors that committed their time to gathering data and assisting in this project. With the continued COVID19 crisis ongoing, I have been hard on all our teams to meet field goals safely and effectively, and for that I am thankful to be a part of such a passionate and dedicated group of conservationists. I want to thank Mikayla Erickson and Carson Main of the St. Louis River Alliance for their assistance in monitoring Chequamegon Point this summer, as well as Mikayla's many photos that went into this report. I want to thank Peggy Burkman and Sumner Matteson for their enduring commitment to this project. Thank you to the National Park Service teams that assisted in banding this year. Thank you to Reena Bowman and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for their efforts in coordinating the regional piping plover conservation effort. And thank you to all our partners.

